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Dan Smoot Report

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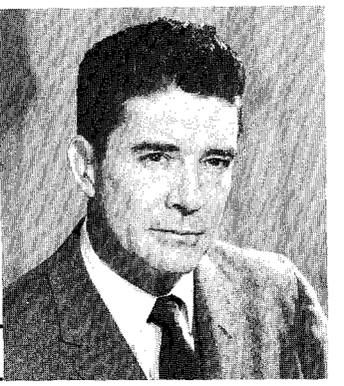

DAN SMOOT

THE SACKING AND BURNING OF WASHINGTON

The night Martin Luther King was murdered in Memphis (Thursday, April 4, 1968), Stokely Carmichael was in Washington, D. C. Within a few minutes after the news was out, Carmichael was leading a small gang of Negroes up and down the the streets, storming into stores, ordering the places closed in honor of King, forcing customers and employees to leave.[1]

The gang grew larger and more violent, began smashing windows and looting stores. Negro mobs formed throughout the Negro business district of Washington; and by 9:00 p.m. the sacking and burning of the capital had begun. Carmichael slipped away and disappeared from the streets.

All night, Negro mobs burned, looted, and robbed, assaulted, murdered, and threatened wholesale slaughter. Scores of whites, including police and firemen, were beaten, hit by rocks, bottles, clubs. Some were kicked and dragged by gangs of howling young Negroes. Whites were pulled from their cars and stomped in the streets. Motorcycle officers were hauled from their vehicles, stoned and mauled. Police in cruising cars, and firemen trying to get to fires were targets. One white man, stopping at a filling station to get directions, was clubbed, beaten, and stabbed to death.

The violence subsided about 4:00 a.m. Friday, April 5. A few hours later, city and federal officials were meeting with Army people at the Pentagon to discuss the calling out of troops. They decided there was no need for troops.

Early Friday morning, controversy arose in the District over the question of whether Stokely Carmichael had had anything to do with causing the Thursday night riot.

Carmichael obligingly cleared up that point. He called a press conference Friday morning to announce that he had started the riot and had led the first gang of vandals and looters. Carmichael said:

"Let me make clear what happened last night. Last night, we led all of those youngsters up and down the street to close the stores in memory of Dr. King.

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"Some of them began kicking in store windows. We weren't stopping them from kicking in a few windows. We were stopping them from coming out on the streets without guns.

"When they come out on the streets, we want them to have guns . . . . The only way to survive is to get some guns."[1]

Carmichael also gave an interview, via long-distance telephone, to Radio Havana, communist Cuba's major broadcast facility. In the interview (which was broadcast in English), Carmichael said:

"It is crystal clear to us that the United States of America must fall in order for humanity to live, and we are going to give our lives for that cause . . . . More people are now beginning to plan seriously a major urban guerrilla warfare where we can begin to retaliate not only for the death of Dr. King, but where we can move seriously with this country to bring it to its knees."[2]

In closing, Carmichael sent his regards to the "brothers and sisters in Cuba," especially Fidel Castro.[2]

Shortly after his press conference and interview with Radio Havana on Friday morning (April 5), Carmichael joined a crowd of some 200 Negro students gathered at Howard University under pretext of holding memorial services for Martin Luther King.

Carmichael spoke to the mob, brandishing a gun above his head, urging Negroes to arm themselves and kill whites.

The rally broke up; and the 200 Negro students headed for downtown Washington to loot and burn, smashing windshields and windows, stoning cars and white occupants on the way.

Officials meeting in the Pentagon began to get scattered reports of looting about 9:00 a.m. Friday. They did nothing. By 1:00 p.m. Friday, reports of arson and looting were coming in from all sections. Officials ordered the D.C. national guard to assemble for drill.

By 2:30 p.m. Friday, marauding Negroes were converging on the downtown area from all directions. Police tried in vain to hold them back. Giving way before the mobs, police fell back and watched the looting and burning. Occasionally, a gang of Negroes would haul some white person out of a car and beat him.

The Negroes stole everything they could get their hands on, from cough drops to grand pianos.

A looting pattern had developed. A small group of Negroes would smash in a store front, to the mad cheers of the mob. When the police did nothing, looters would storm into the store, with more yelling and wild cheering. Well-dressed Negroes would arrive in late-model cars, and the store would be stripped. When the store was emptied, a gasoline-soaked torch would be thrown in to fire it, and another wild cheer would rend the air.

Stores owned by Negroes were, for the most part, untouched. They were identified with "Soul" signs, or with pictures of Martin Luther King bearing the caption "Our Militant Leader."

A regular Washington policeman said:

"I think we could have stopped this thing if they hadn't put us under wraps so. Looters would break a window, then stand aside to watch our reaction. When we did nothing, the mob would move in and ransack the place. We just had to stand there."[3]

One white merchant helplessly watched Negro hoodlums ransack his liquor store, guzzling the stolen whisky on the sidewalk in the presence of police, smashing the empty bottles through windows or against passing police cars or fire equipment. The merchant asked a police officer standing idly by to stop them. The policeman said he had to wait for orders.[4]

Negro gangs looted and burned within two blocks of the White House. All up and down Pennsylvania Avenue, from the White House to the Capitol, stores were hit. Shoppers and employees in big department stores screamed in terror as Negro gangs smashed windows and swarmed in — looting, mauling, threatening, and shouting obscenities at whites. Negro teenagers, carrying stolen goods, ran in front of the White House, taunting police and guards, sneering: "Why don't you shoot us?"

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At 4:03 p.m. Friday (April 5) President Johnson, at the request of the Negro mayor of Washington, finally ordered troops into the city. But by then, the capital of the United States was already paralyzed and burning. Traffic jams, resulting from terrified whites trying to flee the District, made vehicular movement on most streets impossible. Hundreds of fires raged out of control in many areas. Fire equipment could not get to the fires. When they could move, they were under such heavy attack (from Negroes throwing bottles, rocks, and bricks) that they had to withdraw and wait for police protection. The police — still under orders not to use their weapons — had been told to ignore looting and arson and to concentrate on protecting firemen. Even this role they could not perform, because they too were under attack — and fell back, under orders, to avoid the necessity of using force against the mobs. So, Washington burned.

Streets were so clogged with abandoned loot, collapsed buildings, and stalled traffic, that national guard and army troops (ordered out at 4:03 p.m. Friday) were not substantially deployed in the city until Saturday morning. And they moved in with unloaded guns. They, like the police, were ordered to ignore arsonists and looters.

The first troops to arrive set up machine guns around the White House and the Capitol. Johnson — hoping to give minimum offense to Negro rioters — ordered the machine gunners to conceal themselves behind shrubbery.

The White House, the Capitol, and the home of the mayor of Washington were protected. Elsewhere, Negro mobs were permitted to assault, loot, and burn almost at will — even after troops arrived. Many reporters took refuge at the White House, considering it the only safe place in town.

The mayor proclaimed a curfew, effective at 4:00 p.m. Friday; but it did little good. Gangs of young Negro men swaggered down the streets, threatening, frightening, or molesting whites, stealing whatever they pleased. Negro women walked through downtown Washington carrying sacks of rocks to throw at police, firemen, white civilians, and store windows.[3]

Police stopped Stokely Carmichael strolling through a riot section in violation of the curfew. He told them he did not know the curfew was in effect, and they let him go his way.

By Saturday night, April 6, some 14,000 troops and policemen were deployed in Washington. Still under orders not to shoot, they were eventually permitted to use tear gas; and by late Saturday afternoon, they were making thousands of arrests.

Sunday morning, April 7, many parts of Washington looked like a city leveled by enemy bombers. Whole blocks of buildings were burned-out shells; hundreds of people were homeless. Many small businessmen had lost everything they had, and their employees were jobless. Seven persons were known to be dead; but, for days after the riots ended, bodies were being found in burned buildings.

Not until Friday, April 12 — 8 days after rioting began — did the mayor of Washington broadcast that all was clear and the troops were leaving. By then, 645 buildings, 283 housing units, 209 commercial establishments, and 8 public or institutional establishments were listed as damaged or totally destroyed.

The building damage alone in Washington was estimated at $13.3 million. No estimate has been made of loss resulting from burning and looting of the contents of buildings, personal and commercial property, equipment, fixtures, machinery, and so on.[5]

Injured treated at hospitals during the riots totaled 1167; persons arrested (exclusive of juveniles) totaled 7364.

Approximately 10% of all those arrested were employees of regular agencies of the federal government. This does not include an unknown number of persons drawing salaries from poverty-war agencies financed with tax money by the federal government. There was no indication that any of the arrested government employees would

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lose their jobs. It seemed fairly certain that those charged with felonies would be handled, if at all, on charges reduced to misdemeanors.

A 1966 law makes it a felony (punishable by 10 years in prison and a $10,000 fine) for anyone in the District to incite or urge a riot that results in personal injuries or property damage of $5000 or more. Yet, nothing has been done about Stokely Carmichael. The D. C. public safety director says the matter is under investigation. But it is known in Washington that Attorney General Ramsey Clark does not want to prosecute Carmichael.[6]

Clark helped devise the "humanitarian" technique of riot-containment used in Washington. He has congratulated troops and police for the restraint that enabled them eventually to contain the riot without doing much harm to rioters. He hopes the technique will be used in other cities hit by Negro riots.

Washington officials claim that police and military restraint "saved Washington from a bloodbath."[7] Whose blood was spared? The blood of the arsonists, vandals, thieves, and assorted thugs who destroyed the homes and businesses of others, caused an unknown number of deaths, and injured more than a thousand!

If Washington's streets had been bathed with the blood of some of the savages who sacked the city, it is most unlikely that Washington would have another riot. If it were known that maximum, deadly force would be used against rioters in all cities, rioting would stop.

Panicking in the face of mob violence, the House of Representatives, on April 10, passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which contains an "open-housing" section eliminating the right of people to manage and control their own property.

Now, the Reverend A. D. King — announcing that he will carry out the plans of his communist-fronting dead brother to lead a poor people's march on Washington this spring and summer — says:

"We are going to Washington not to request and not to demand, but to command the . . . Congress to do something . . . . In the past we have asked for crumbs, but now we are asking for the whole loaf."[8]

If we do not vote out of office every member of Congress who supports or yields to the outrageous demands of Negro agitators, our nation is doomed. Anarchy is growing at such a pace that we may not have another chance if we do not turn the rascals out this year.

For that reason, I urge all of you to get, and pass on to others, copies of our comprehensive, 28-page "Record of the 90th Congress" — which shows how every member of Congress stands on "civil-rights" and "poverty war" measures which encourage and reward the militants, agitators, and hoodlums who are destroying our civilization. Prices: 1 copy, $1.00; 10 copies, $9.50; 25 copies, $22.50; 50 copies, $42.50; 100 copies, $75.00.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) "Killing Stirs Looting in Part of D.C.," *The* (Wash., D.C.) *Evening Star*, Apr. 5, 1968, pp. A1, 7

(2) Article by Jeremiah O'Leary, *The* (Wash., D.C.) *Evening Star*, Apr. 12, 1968, p. A9

(3) *U.S. News & World Report*, Apr. 22, 1968, p. 33

(4) "Special Report: 'We Don't Have a Business,'" *The* (Wash., D.C.) *Sunday Star*, Apr. 14, 1968, p. A8

(5) AP article, *The Dallas Morning News*, Apr. 13, 1968, p. A10

(6) Article by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *The Dallas Times Herald*, Apr. 22, 1968, p. A20

(7) Article by John Fialka, *The* (Wash., D.C.) *Evening Star*, Apr. 12, 1968, pp. A1, 6

(8) "Quotes In The News," *The Dallas Times Herald*, Apr. 22, 1968, p. A2

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